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Thursday, 5 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, His Excellency, Mr. Hassan Hassanov.

Mr. Kouliev (Azerbaijan) *(interpretation from Russian)*: Mr. President, my Foreign Minister has asked me to read out his statement on his behalf.

"Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you upon your election to the important post of President of this historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that, under your skilful leadership, the General Assembly will write one more significant page in the chronicles of the United Nations. I should also like to express my gratitude to your distinguished predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for his valuable contribution to the work of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

"I should like to express particular words of gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts to strengthen peace on Earth.

"We have gathered here on this fiftieth anniversary year of the existence of the United Nations, understanding as we do the tremendous significance of the role played by our Organization in the world today. All progressive people welcomed the end of the cold war, rightly believing that it would lead to an easing of nuclear confrontation and an improvement of the political climate on the planet. However, the dissolution of totalitarian systems entailed the emergence of bloody armed conflicts and hot spots around the world.

"The world has witnessed with tremendous alarm the continuing military confrontations and tension in the republics of the former Yugoslavia, Tajikistan and the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

"For seven years now we have seen open aggression from the Republic of Armenia against the Azerbaijan Republic. Twenty per cent of Azerbaijan territory has been under occupation by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia. More than one million Azerbaijanis have been forcibly driven from their homes. A serious hotbed of tension has been created in the region and threatens international peace and security.

"The Security Council has adopted four resolutions on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict in which it called upon the aggressor to withdraw, immediately and totally, from the occupied territories. However, the Republic of Armenia has completely ignored compliance with the resolutions

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and as a Member of the United Nations is, in effect, refusing to follow the decisions of one of its major organs.

"Almost a year has elapsed since the adoption in Budapest by the Heads of State and Government, members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), of a decision appointing the co-chairmen of the Minsk Conference on the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict designed to ensure the signing of a major political agreement the realization of which should eliminate all the consequences of the conflict. However, in this case the Republic of Armenia is pursuing a policy of putting forward obviously unacceptable conditions and attempting to impose provisions which would impose in advance a political status on the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Here we are faced with attempts to intimidate us with the possibility of the undermining of the peace-keeping operation in the region. It is, to say the least, unethical to accuse the victim of aggression, of not being willing to compromise on the problem of the liberation of its occupied territories.

"Azerbaijan, for its part, is continuously displaying its readiness for constructive cooperation with the mediators in order to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict.

"We have repeatedly expressed ourselves in favour of a multinational peace-keeping operation of the OSCE for the maintenance of peace on the border between Azerbaijan and Armenia and in the region as a whole.

"At the present time discussions are taking place on the mandate and parameters of the peace-keeping operations of that Organization. In connection with the fact that the peace-keeping operation in our region will be the first to be carried out by the OSCE, Azerbaijan has agreed to the provision of technical expert consultative assistance from the United Nations for the success of this operation.

"Azerbaijan shares the general understanding that peace-keeping operations should be viewed as temporary in nature and should be used to promote a climate to facilitate the settlement of a particular problem. At the same time, however, we must not lose sight of the fact that settlement is the ultimate goal. In implementing any peace-keeping operation we must strictly abide by the principles contained in the United Nations Charter, particularly the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-intervention in internal affairs.

"Peace-keeping operations must be based on an appropriate mandate drawn up with the consent of all the parties involved, and they must be impartial, objective and neutral in character. Azerbaijan agrees with the current and established international practice under which the military contingent of any country participating in a given peace-keeping operation should not exceed 30 per cent of the total for the force. It is also important for the international organs involved in peace-keeping operations to furnish all available information to States and to keep world public opinion informed of the progress of the operation.

"The settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan entails strict compliance with these principles. Failing the liberation of all Azerbaijani territory occupied by Armenia, there can be no question of any comprehensive settlement of this conflict. Restoration of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes in accordance with international practice are the only bases on which a solution can be found to the problem of the Armenian national minority population in Azerbaijan.

"In the context of a settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict I should also like to draw attention to the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, a principle that the Republic of Armenia is flouting. The world has not yet found a workable balance between the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, on the one hand, and the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, on the other. Nevertheless, it is clear that the right to self-determination, as contained in the Charter, is not intended to furnish a pretext for flouting the principle of independence and territorial integrity.

"The Republic of Azerbaijan, now a full-fledged member of the world community, has undertaken to abide by all universally recognized norms and principles of international law in its relations with other States. The Republic of

Armenia, however, has persistently attempted to use the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination as a pretext to legitimize and consolidate its territorial claims and to justify its aggression against Azerbaijan and its occupation of Azerbaijani territory. Indeed, the expansionist circles in Armenia have been implementing such a policy for years. In 1988, when the Soviet Union was still in existence, the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic expelled its Azerbaijani population — some 200,000 persons, a national minority. Immediately following that inhuman decision, the Parliament of Armenia, acting counter to all the norms and principles of international law, approved Armenia's annexation of the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan — in other words, it decided to annex a part of the territory of a neighbouring State.

"Subsequently, 50,000 persons were expelled from the Nagorny Karabakh region, whose total population numbered 170,000, with the financial and military support of the Republic of Armenia. In addition, Armenian armed forces were used to consolidate the annexation of the Lachin and Shusha districts of Azerbaijan, through which the Republic of Armenia maintains direct communication with the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Through this corridor, cynically referred to as a humanitarian corridor, a river of weapons, ammunitions and human resources flows from the Republic of Armenia. Some 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan is now occupied by Armenian armed forces. Again, this armed expansion is accompanied by a thorough 'ethnic cleansing' of the occupied Azerbaijani territories and a scorched-earth policy.

"The world community must condemn the actions of Armenia in Azerbaijan and call for the full and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories and for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes. This is clearly a case in which we are witnessing a total disregard for the provision of the United Nations Charter that calls upon all Member States

> 'to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.'

World public opinion must not be misled as to the true motives for the actions of Armenia, which is cloaking its aggression against Azerbaijan in the lofty principle of the right of peoples to self-determination.

"Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan has caused enormous suffering and grief to the whole of the Azerbaijani people, who have been forced by the military actions and occupation of the Armenian armed forces to leave their homes, abandon their property and flee in order to avoid falling into the hands of the occupiers. The Azerbaijani Government has been forced to convert many schools, dwellings, sanatoriums and rest homes into housing for refugees and displaced persons. In the territory of Azerbaijan, people are forced to take refuge in tent cities. The normal life of the country has been almost totally destroyed.

"We are grateful to the countries and international and non-governmental organizations that have lent active humanitarian assistance to Azerbaijan. The United Nations too has played an important role in this assistance. The activities of the 1995-1996 humanitarian programmes, as presented in the United Nations consolidated inter-agency humanitarian assistance appeal for the Caucasus, include relief projects in the food, non-food, shelter, education and health sectors. However, as the Secretary-General indicates in his annual report on the work of the Organization, only 37 per cent, or $12.8 million, of the requirements pledged for humanitarian activities in Azerbaijan had been received as at 31 July 1995. Other projects carried out under the aegis of the United Nations have addressed capacity-building and the transition from emergency assistance to development.

"Azerbaijan has always attached great importance to multifaceted cooperation with the United Nations system in the spheres of social and economic development. Following the dissolution of the USSR our country was confronted with the task of radically restructuring the Azerbaijani economy on a free-market basis. No country can be expected to undertake such a radical restructuring unilaterally without the active cooperation of international organizations, and Azerbaijan has been no exception. So far, we can point with some satisfaction to the continued cooperation between the Government of Azerbaijan and such important

international financial institutions as the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. We have had considerable success in stabilizing the exchange rate of the manat, our national currency. The Government of Azerbaijan has received approval of sizeable loans to assist in a number of major infrastructure projects and for drilling and transporting oil.

"Although the majority of the contacts between Azerbaijan and the United Nations system have been successful, we must nevertheless mention some current problems. We have not yet been able to resolve the question of a proper scale for Azerbaijan's contribution to the regular budget of the Organization that would reflect my country's real ability to pay.

"In Azerbaijan's brief period of independence some important changes have occurred. The Republic of Azerbaijan has begun to build its free democratic society on the basis of a market economy. We shall continue to pursue that path. It goes without saying, however, that the transition from one social and economic system to another requires a certain amount of time and very careful and meticulous work.

"We need fundamental changes in many aspects of the life of the Republic, and corresponding changes in the thinking of our people. After long stagnation, the people have achieved civic freedom; now, they must understand that freedom. This is one of our most important areas of activity. A certain amount of progress has been made with respect to the political life of Azerbaijan. The principles of political pluralism, personal freedoms and freedom of expression, of the press and of conscience are guaranteed. Human rights are effectively protected. A multi-party system is at work. We consistently act on the principle of the primacy of law. Irrespective of sex or national, religious, ethnic or linguistic affiliation, citizens of Azerbaijan enjoy equal rights.

"Azerbaijan's highest legislative body, the *Milli Majlis*, has adopted a new electoral law, which is a milestone in the development of a democratic society in our country. This law is a further example of how Azerbaijan is proceeding with the building of a democratic civil society. Parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan are scheduled for 12 November this year; this confirms our unswerving policy of strengthening independence and sovereignty. Many countries and major international organizations, including the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others, have already agreed to act as observers of the elections. I take this opportunity to invite States Members of the United Nations to send observers to the elections in Azerbaijan.

"In the social and economic sphere, our purposeful reforms in the political area and towards a democratic society have made it possible to create the preconditions for economic and social change, which is proceeding with success in our country and which is laying the foundation for an early transition to market relationships. The Republic has achieved a certain stabilization of macro-economic indicators and is doing all it can to encourage the development of free enterprise. We have begun a conscientious programme of privatization. Inflation, which had in previous years reached 30 to 35 per cent per month, has now been reduced to near zero. We appeal to the international community and to foreign businesses to increase their investment in the economy of Azerbaijan. We have created all the proper conditions for profitable activities by foreign companies. International consortiums are stepping up their activities; in addition to the Azerbaijan State oil company, these include major transnational corporations. These activities are aimed at joint exploration and development of oil and gas deposits in the Azerbaijan sector of the Caspian Sea.

"The 50 years of the United Nations have shown that the peoples of the world can achieve a great deal when they combine their efforts and their will to defend world peace and to achieve the prosperity of peoples. We know that it was concern with preventing another world war that ordained the foundation of the United Nations, and this remains the main task before mankind today. For war annuls all that the efforts of peoples have achieved."

The President: I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. Fernando Naranjo Villalobos.

Mr. Naranjo Villalobos (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is the honour of the delegation of Costa Rica to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this historic session marking the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. We are extremely pleased that a distinguished son of Portugal, a country so closely linked to Latin

America by history and culture, has been chosen for this high position. We offer you our full cooperation in the performance of your important duties.

We wish to express to Member States the gratitude of the Government and the people of Costa Rica for having elected our country to one of the vice-presidencies of the Assembly. That election is a significant honour.

It also gives me pleasure to join previous speakers in thanking the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, for the splendid way in which he performed his duties as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

Costa Rica wishes to convey its recognition of the indefatigable work carried out by the Secretary-General and by other Secretariat officials towards peace and security. The devoted efforts of the Secretary-General to champion a safer, fairer, more peaceful and more humane world for future generations will be a great legacy for mankind, along with his determination to transform and modernize the Organization and carry it into the future.

Fifty years ago, Mr. Julio Acosta, former President of the Republic and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, who headed our country's delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization at San Francisco, said that the future of the world lay with the Charter of the United Nations, which was the most important human document of the last 1,000 years. That, indeed, is what it has been, at least over the last 50 years, despite the many difficulties, the many frustrations, the many conflicts. The Charter of the United Nations has set a new course for mankind and has provided the international community with an ethical code that grows stronger every day.

Costa Rica, a founding Member of the Organization, is firmly committed to the United Nations, in accordance with its long-standing regime of democracy and respect for human rights. The values and principles which give shape to this Organization were an integral part of Costa Rican life many years before the San Francisco Conference. With the abolition of the armed forces in 1948, our country renewed its faith in law and its hope that reason, not force, would govern relations among human beings. With that decision of President José Figueres, Costa Rica addressed the world and declared peace. With the same thought in mind, the Government of Costa Rica has promoted many United Nations initiatives in support of peace and human rights, including the establishment of the University for Peace, the declaration of the International Year of Peace and the creation of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. All these ideas are aimed at realizing mankind's dream of sustainable peace.

In the spirit of commemorating in deeds the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, Costa Rica proposed a World Week of Peace, to begin on 24 October this year. This initiative, sponsored by a large number of countries and unanimously adopted by the General Assembly on 12 July 1995, would silence weapons everywhere in the world for at least a week, so that in the future sustainable peace might prevail over destructive war. Costa Rica hopes that during the Week all Member States will carry out pro-peace activities and reflect on how important it is for mankind to learn to live under the sign of concord. My delegation is aware of the practical constraints that stand in the way of the World Week of Peace achieving its goals on the desired scale. However, it is our belief that any move that could be taken this week to promote dialogue, coexistence and harmony between nations would be a valuable contribution to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and to the building of the future. The effort will have been worthwhile if even one human being — a child, a woman or a man — is saved from death as a result of this initiative.

There are no conflicts without solutions. All ground is fertile for reconciliation. How many tears were shed in South Africa, how much blood was spilled in the Middle East! However, animosity has gradually disappeared and harmony is beginning to flourish. Multicultural democracy is giving a new and peaceful direction to the history of South Africa. With the recent agreement on the West Bank, Israelis and Palestinians continue to show that peace is always possible. If there is a will for peace, peace can be achieved. In that context, the United Nations must continue to be the forum where all the peoples of the world have fair representation. No country should be excluded from becoming a Member of this Organization.

For many years, the world prevented a general conflagration by resorting to containment. Today, although the East-West confrontation has dissipated, and preventive diplomacy is making headway, there are still latent seeds of world conflict, concentrated in the sub-human conditions in which a large portion of the world's population live, and evident also in the massive decay of the environment.

The urgent need to solve senseless conflicts such as the one in the former Yugoslavia and to end the violence besetting so many places in the world should not make us lose sight of the fact that true peace involves a series of elements much more significant than the mere absence of war. As has been recently stated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who offered to the world such a beautiful message of hope and goodwill today from this Hall,

> "... peace is not limited to the silence of cannons. It is nourished with justice and freedom. It needs the atmosphere of a spirit rich in some fundamental elements, such as the sense of God, the taste for beauty, the love of truth, the choice of solidarity, and the capacity for tenderness and the courage to forgive."

The fiftieth anniversary of the Organization is an occasion for reflection, but we should also use it to meditate on the challenge of our times: to achieve sustainable development.

In Central America we have committed ourselves firmly to a comprehensive peace process and democratization, in a regional effort to build peace and democracy where these are needed, and to strengthen them where they already exist. This journey is culminating today in the encouraging advances experienced in the dialogue in Guatemala. Costa Rica is optimistic about the efforts to find a lasting peaceful solution to the problem involving that brotherly country. We give our full support to the negotiation process being developed to that end under the auspices of the United Nations.

Central Americans, who for many years have successfully advocated this process of peace and democratization, are today also committed to an alliance to generate in our region a new model of development, combining freedom and the well-being of the vast majority, with respect for the natural environment. This Central American commitment to the region itself and to the international community is being implemented through various actions and development projects. We hope that the international community as a whole will understand and appreciate Central America's effort, and will lend it its support, as several friendly nations have already done.

As an integral part of the process of the consolidation of peace and the building of sustainable development, respect for human rights is no longer just a legal and moral obligation of Governments; it has become an essential condition for harmonious life in every society. However, we cannot disregard the fact that many situations in which these rights are still ignored or violated persist, making the task of the relevant international bodies doubly important. It is not legal to violate human rights, but it is not right to sit idly by, using the pretext of respect for sovereignty, which is only hypothetical respect and borders on complicity.

For Costa Rica, a party to the International Covenants on this matter and the headquarters of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, it is essential that the United Nations assume a more dynamic and energetic role in the protection of fundamental human rights and require from Member States strict compliance with their responsibilities in this area. For this purpose, protective entities, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), should be provided with more resources. We must also strengthen measures against States which ignore the recommendations of those bodies, or prevent them from performing their duties.

We are also concerned that overcoming the balance of terror has not put an end to the arms race, and that is a matter of concern to us. We cannot understand why at this time in history there are still countries which, with surprising levity, destroy the environment and endanger their neighbours with nuclear tests. This is a flagrant violation of the commitments that marked the conclusion of the negotiations to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and has a negative effect on the tasks related to the drafting of the comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. Costa Rica has never possessed, and does not want to possess, nuclear or chemical weapons, and strongly urges participant States to speedily conclude negotiations on this treaty and to ensure that it takes effect as soon as possible.

However, the danger of a nuclear holocaust should not make us unconcerned about the problems caused by conventional weapons, the traffic in which has a tragic impact on the third world and keeps a series of very harmful conflicts alive. Many Governments of underdeveloped countries continue to waste resources on weapons, resources needed desperately by their own people for basic necessities. The democracies of the industrialized world continue providing those weapons in a business which undoubtedly, on a short-term basis, is financially more profitable than cooperation for development.

In 1994, relying on an initiative of the Government of Romania, a group of 25 countries proposed to the

General Assembly the adoption of a voluntary, global and non-discriminatory code of conduct for the international transfer of weapons. My delegation believes that this subject must be reactivated without delay and also that concrete action must be taken to make the Register of Conventional Weapons within the United Nations effective.

The reduction of military spending has an immediate repercussion on budget allocations for the promotion of development and well-being. In Costa Rica, we learned this lesson almost half a century ago and we have had no reason since then to regret our decision. However, we also believe that providing special treatment, such as cooperation for development and the transfer of technology for peaceful purposes, to countries which reduce military spending would be a great incentive, as has been suggested by Oscar Arias, a former President of Costa Rica and a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in 1987.

In the spirit of building a new world, a world better than the one that existed 50 years ago, the international community has the duty to promote changes in the area of international economic relations.

In recent years, there have been significant reformulations in international trade plans. A World Trade Organization has been created to replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and there has been a proliferation of regional free-trade plans. However, this has not dissipated the worrying trends towards protectionism that are increasingly being developed by industrialized nations. While the underdeveloped countries are applying programmes with a view to the adjustment and the opening up of trade, the richest countries are imposing burdensome limitations on trade. My delegation considers that the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to be held in South Africa in 1996, must become a fundamental forum for the discussion of these problems.

Since the first meeting of UNCTAD, held in Geneva in 1964, 77 countries of the Third World have joined in demanding more equitable conditions in regard to world trade. The fight for this new international economic order has today become a priority because, even though the military-political blocs which divided the world in the recent past have now disappeared, the gap between North and South is becoming ever greater. In the circumstances, we consider that the presidency of the Group of 77 and China, to which Costa Rica was appointed a few days ago, is not only a great honour but also an important responsibility. Costa Rica is deeply grateful for the support it received in achieving this significant position and we hope that in the performance of our duties we will make a constructive contribution towards the launching of the Group of 77 into the new international realities.

For some years now, it has been suggested that there is a need to redesign the United Nations in order to give the Organization a new look in keeping with a different world situation. Costa Rica, on various occasions, has expressed its support for initiatives in this area, including the suggestion that Germany and Japan should become permanent members of the Security Council, and that we should guarantee permanent representation for all regions in that body. Today, on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary, we wish to reiterate Costa Rica's firm commitment to the renovation of the United Nations. It is urgent to take steps along the lines pointed out by the Secretary-General in his "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development", and it is important that the international system should comply with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the mandates of the Security Council. It is also essential to provide a follow-up to, and implement, the commitments made at the Rio, Copenhagen and Beijing conferences.

In celebrating the fifty years of its existence, the United Nations is still young. It remains young because its spirit is still generously irrigated with idealism and with faith in mankind. The Organization remains young because it still believes that the human being has a greater capacity to convince than to shoot, to love than to hate, to build than to destroy, to procreate than to kill.

Let us preserve this essence of youth in our Organization. In 1995, as in 1945, in spite of disappointments, bitter days and years, the United Nations represents the hope that there will be a future for our children. The United Nations is the most important demonstration that there will be a future because the words uttered in this Hall many years ago by the then Foreign Minister and later President of Costa Rica, Daniel Oduber, are still valid. He said that the United Nations had revealed itself to be the only entity capable of minimizing the sufferings which, alternating with the satisfaction of being alive and of performing our duties, were the common lot of mankind.

I would conclude with the inspiring words uttered by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in this Hall this morning,

"The answer to the fear which darkens human existence at the end of the century is the common effort to build a civilization of love, founded on the universal values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 6*).

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahaf.

Mr. Al-Sahaf (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I am pleased to begin my statement by extending to you sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the present session of the General Assembly. I am confident that your high competence and profound experience will contribute effectively to the success of the work of the present historic session.

This session coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization. There is no doubt that such an important occasion calls for examining the course the Organization has taken in order to draw the best object-lessons that would enable the international community to proceed to the building of a better future in which peace and stability would prevail on the basis of justice, the balance of interests of all peoples and genuine international cooperation that would be free from selfishness and hegemony; a future which would open the doors towards the solution of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems that continue to cause suffering to the overwhelming majority of States, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Members of the international community welcomed the end of the cold war. They view it as the harbinger of a new age. However, many representatives of many Member States did point out the dangers of imbalance in international relations. They warned that the supremacy of one super-Power would make international life hostage to that Power and, thereby, lead to the imposition of its views, interests and policies on the rest of the world. The correcting of this imbalance in the international situation requires a great deal of care in upholding equality between States, restructuring the United Nations in line with well-balanced formulas, revitalizing the work of its institutions in a manner that would ensure balance and genuine participation in responsibility, prevent hegemony by one or certain parties over the international community and over the United Nations with its institutions. Although these objectives have not been achieved so far, to work towards their achievement and to develop an understanding of what they involved continue to be urgent needs of the highest priority.

Mr. Camacho Omiste (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We believe that the imposition of a unipolar standpoint on the work of the United Nations totally contradicts the purposes and principles of the Charter. The persistence of such attempts would lead only to more anxiety and deterioration in international relations.

This conviction stems from Iraq's actual experience over the past five years. It is an experience that relates to the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council on the so-called Gulf Crisis, and especially the implementation of resolution 687 (1991).

That resolution imposed upon Iraq a number of obligations, as a basis for a comprehensive settlement of the situation. A few days after the adoption of the resolution, Iraq informed the Security Council of its readiness to comply with the provisions of the resolution despite the harsh nature of the obligations imposed thereby. Since that date, Iraq has seriously taken upon itself the implementation of the resolution in order to normalize the situation at the regional and international levels. In fact, a great many steps have taken place in implementing the resolution. Our people hope that what has been achieved will be the subject of an objective and fair evaluation by the Security Council that would lead to the lifting of the embargo imposed upon Iraq for more than five years now.

Allow me to review very briefly the steps taken by Iraq in the context of implementing the obligations imposed by the Security Council in resolution 687 (1991).

On 10 November 1994, Iraq officially recognized the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the political independence of the State of Kuwait, and the international boundary demarcated by the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Demarcation Commission. This was done in implementation of resolutions 687 (1991) and 833 (1993).

Iraq has cooperated also with the representatives of the United Nations in returning Kuwaiti property on the basis of the lists presented through the United Nations coordinator. In this connection, Iraq affirmed that it will

return any item of property that would be found when it is established that it belongs to Kuwait.

As regards the prisoners of war and the missing persons, Iraq, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 686 (1991) and 687(1991), released all prisoners of war and detainees who were in Iraq and repatriated them in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). As for investigating the fate of missing persons, we are cooperating fully within the framework of the joint work carried out under the auspices of the ICRC by the Tripartite Commission and its Technical Subcommittee on Military and Civilian Missing Prisoners of War and Mortal Remains. Since the middle of 1994, when we found the appropriate modality for effective technical work in dealing with this humanitarian problem, we have sought within the said framework to provide answers to the questions raised in the individual inquiry files presented to us on the basis of the available information. Moreover, Iraq has been receptive to all the initiatives of States and personalities to find a quick solution to this humanitarian problem in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

With regard to the subject of compensation, Iraq accepted the principle of responsibility in accordance with international law to compensate direct damage resulting from the events in Kuwait as stated in resolution 687 (1991).

Iraq has cooperated also with the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) in carrying out its tasks and has extended every possible assistance to the Mission with the aim of enabling it to perform its duties.

Iraq has affirmed its adherence to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and Bacteriological Methods of warfare, and deposited the instruments of ratification of the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, in implementation of paragraph 7 of resolution 687 (1991).

As for the implementation by Iraq of section (C) of resolution 687 (1991), that is the provisions relating to proscribed weapons, our relationship with the Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) witnessed, in the middle of 1993, a turning point in the field of positive and constructive cooperation in order to finalize the implementation of the said section.

On 26 November 1993, we presented the official response in regard to compliance with resolution 715 (1991) relating to monitoring in the field of weapons.

In the process of work with the Special Commission and the IAEA, we have not hesitated to offer all possible assistance to facilitate the work, whether by presenting information, available documents, details relating to past programmes, the destruction of prohibited weapons, and the setting up of an effective monitoring system. We have been able to achieve substantive progress in this area, as acknowledged by the Special Commission in its report to the Security Council on 19 June 1995, and have taken the final steps to complete the desired work.

These facts are well established in the relationship between Iraq and the Special Commission and the IAEA. The substantive nature of these facts cannot be distorted by the campaign waged against Iraq by well-known quarters because of special objectives of their own which are totally alien to the objectives of resolution 687 (1991).

Despite all the propaganda, Iraq no longer has any proscribed weapons, equipment, devices or materials, and this is the essence of resolution 687 (1991). We affirm our determination to continue our cooperation with the Special Commission and the IAEA to close the weapons file in accordance with the relevant resolutions and have the embargo against Iraq lifted.

I should like to express here our deep regret regarding the a priori ill-intentioned exaggerations which cast a terrifying image of past Iraqi weapons programmes, and the deliberate distortion of the fact that these programmes were something of the past and that they no longer exist. Raising fears in such a contrived fashion is not an objective position at all. It is an attitude prompted by political objectives which are far removed from the concern over security and stability in the region and the provisions of resolution 687 (1991).

Iraq has taken all these steps even while it has continued to suffer the hardship caused by a total embargo, the most extended ever imposed by the Security Council in all its history. It is an embargo that embraces everything and every aspect of life with the exception of food and medicine. However, the freezing of Iraq's assets with foreign banks has prevented Iraq from using any of those assets to purchase its needs of medicines and foodstuffs and, thereby, has made the exception relating to food and medicine devoid of any practical content. The

situation in Iraq has been aggravated by the actual practice obtaining in the work of the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990), which is in charge of the application of sanctions against Iraq. Work in the Committee proceeds along highly bureaucratic lines and follows the rule of unanimity. This has provided certain States with an easy way to object and thereby to reject a large number of export requests to Iraq to meet civilian humanitarian needs, from pencils and educational materials to automobile tyres and other simple civilian provisions. All these matters are documented in the records of the 661 Committee.

The deliberate insistence on prolonging the embargo against Iraq is not linked to Iraq's implementation of its obligations. It is a systematic plan to inflict severe damage upon Iraq and to deliberately destroy its infrastructure and put paid to its developmental capabilities. This is a fact that is known to all. The reports of the competent United Nations Agencies operating in Iraq and of non-governmental organizations concerned with relief warned against the deterioration of the situation as a result of the shortage of food and medicine, which threatens the lives of millions of Iraqis, including thousands of children, women and old people. In this connection, I should like to refer to the last alert of the World Food Programme, issued on 26 September 1995.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, and his "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace", refer clearly to the problem of sanctions. We should like in turn to draw the attention of Member States to the fact that the application of sanctions against Iraq, with such cruelty and bureaucratic complexity, calls for questioning and scrutiny, in the interests of objectivity. We are not sure that all the representatives in the General Assembly know that the Security Council reviews the sanctions regime against Iraq every 60 days, and that 27 reviews have been conducted to date without any easing of the sanctions. The situation remains the same as it has been since 3 April 1991, as if nothing had been achieved. Is this a healthy situation?

The tragic consequences of the embargo have not been limited to the food and health sectors in Iraq. The sections of agriculture, education and environment also have sustained grave damage, due to the shortages of materials and the basic requirements needed for work in such sectors, even at the minimum level required to satisfy the basic needs of the civilian population.

The aggravation of this extremely difficult situation has not prevented us from continuing to implement our obligations under the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. It is worth noting that, as is known to all, while we were being called upon to implement our obligations, and while we were deploying persistent efforts to do just that, we have not received in return any objective and equitable position that would have reduced sanctions commensurately with the progress achieved by Iraq in implementing the resolutions, or that would have given encouragement and hope and given confidence that the situation would be normalized eventually, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The reality has been the very opposite. From the very beginning and to date, we have been the target of many threats; doubts have been raised about our intentions; and we have been, twice, the target of armed aggression. There has been considerable deceit with regard to objectives. Pressure has been brought to bear on any party that even thought of treating us fairly, even if such fairness was not intended as a gesture towards Iraq but as a means of safeguarding the credibility of the Charter system and of the resolutions of the Security Council. We have been accused of intermittent and selective cooperation and of a lack of peaceful intentions and lack of credibility, to such an extent that the levelling of accusations by certain parties has come to resemble a chronic pathological alignment. Such accusations have been accompanied by the continued pursuance on the practical level of policies aimed at interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq in order to destabilize it; to undermine its security, stability, the freedom of its people and its sovereignty; and to try and change its political system.

A super-Power has imposed upon my country two no-fly zones, in the north and the south, without any legal justification or authorization from the Security Council. It has also exercised every means of pressure and deception to perpetuate the harsh conditions caused by the embargo against Iraq, while, at the same time, it conspires, quite openly, to change the regime. Without any hesitation, its officials declare that such is its intention. While all this takes place, it is we who are asked to prove our peaceful intentions and credibility.

It is no secret that the Power that leads the onslaught I have spoken of against Iraq is the United States of America. All the facts on the ground make it clear that it is the United States of America and no one else that should be asked to demonstrate its credibility, to

prove that its intentions are peaceful, and to desist from its continuing acts of provocation, aggression and interference in the internal affairs of Iraq and from fomenting tension in the Gulf region under the pretext of an illusory threat.

President Saddam Hussein noted that the American administration's accusation that Iraq lacks credibility in its relationship with the Special Commission is a false one, and that it is the United States that does not have credibility in dealing with States and international organizations. Where is the credibility in the position of the United States when it declares its determination not to lift the sanctions against Iraq even if Iraq implements Security Council resolution 687 (1991), of which the United States was the chief author? Again, where is the credibility in the position of the United States when the American administration masses its naval and military forces in the Gulf and in the Mediterranean under the false pretext that Iraq is planning to attack Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?

I do not wish to enter into polemics with the representatives of the United States in the General Assembly. But I find it necessary, with regard to the American allegations about credibility, to raise certain points of principle which call for serious thought and contemplation. Before I do that, I should like to ask this question: if it is important that the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council should be founded on credibility, then how can allegations about the credibility of Iraq be accepted at a time when the State which repeats those allegations puts itself above the Security Council and above the Charter and gives itself the right to interpret United Nations resolutions and to arbitrarily draw conclusions from such interpretations that agree with its own selfish interests which are far removed from any basis to be found in the provisions of the resolutions themselves?

While on the subject of credibility, where are the efforts of the Security Council, and the United States in particular, with regard to the implementation of paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which aims at declaring the Middle East as a zone free from weapons of mass destruction? This is an objective that has to be a fundamental cornerstone of the edifice of peace, security and stability in the region if such an edifice is to be built on sturdy, well-balanced and equitable foundations. It is an objective that acquires great importance from the standpoint of the oft-mentioned credibility, since it is a known fact that Israel possesses those weapons. Why does the United States keep completely silent about paragraph 14, and why has the Security Council not taken any action towards the implementation of that part of its resolution? Does such a blatant double standard have anything to do with credibility?

Is it objective or even fair to imagine that the obligations stipulated in Security Council resolutions could be implemented in a natural fashion in the context of such circumstances, atmospherics, and hostile policies directed against Iraq?

Iraq is well aware of the fact that it is not in its interest to conceal any information relating to past weapons programmes, and that its interest lies in working to lift as soon as possible the sanctions that are imposed on it. Indeed, Iraq is acting in full conformity with this objective. In this connection, we call upon member States of the Security Council not to jump to any conclusions on the basis of any unjust accusations levelled at Iraq, because the right thing to do would be to wait for the outcome of the work of the Special Commission, which is responsible for evaluating the implementation by Iraq of the Council's resolutions concerning the proscribed weapons.

We do not call for anything more than the legally sound application of Security Council resolutions in consonance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, and not in line with the whims and aims of unilateral policies of a certain State, which are founded on the logic of naked power, opportunism, double standards and the imposition of hegemony.

We believe that there is a collective duty to work jointly with firmness in order to put things in the right perspective in order to ensure the sound application of the provisions of the Charter. The first step in this direction requires us to ponder the philosophy of the sanctions as created by the Charter. Is the sanctions regime a means towards an end, or is it an end in itself? What is the nature of the said regime? Is it punitive, or is it a means whereby the purposes of the Charter should be achieved without reference to the individual policies of individual Member States?

It is well known to all that the sanctions regime created by the Charter is nothing more than a means aimed at achieving certain results which would ultimately lead to the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations as elaborated in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter, and that the means should cease to be applied once the end has been achieved.

The competence of the Security Council to impose sanctions is an exceptional means that is used when it is established, objectively, that all other means of peaceful settlement of disputes have failed. Such a means should not be, however, a tool in the hands of a super-Power or of a group of major Powers to achieve foreign policy goals at the expense of the common interest of Member States.

It is now patently clear that the imposition of sanctions on Iraq and the maintenance of the embargo against it, in the well-known fashion, cannot be justified on the substantive basis of the provisions of the Charter, because it has become, in actual fact, an extension of the unilateral policy of a super-Power that has made sanctions an end in themselves and a vindictive means that serves its own interests in the region.

In essence, the grounds for the imposition of sanctions on Iraq no longer exist and, thus, the sanctions should be lifted. But a well-known State obstructs the process.

We should like to say to the United States that the solution lies in dialogue, which provides a mechanism for the achievement of interests on a balanced and equitable basis. This is what Iraq has called for and continues to call for. The policy of hegemony and of creating crises cannot but fail, because it is illegitimate and because the international community rejects it. While this continues to be our position of principle, we unfortunately find that the United States statesmen ignore the realities of the region and the needs and aspirations of its peoples, who yearn to live in stability, peace and fruitful cooperation amongst themselves and with the world as a whole.

At a time when we witness the tensions and internal conflicts that prevail in the states of the region, and the feelings of bitterness amongst their peoples as a result of the current short-sighted policies, which recall to mind the policies of the old imperialist Powers, we in Iraq should like, from this rostrum, to call for the promotion of relations of dialogue, understanding and good neighbourliness amongst the States of the region, on the basis of mutual respect, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Iraq is an ancient country with a very long history that goes back 7,000 years. The Iraqi people, who have contributed greatly to human civilization, will remain in control of their affairs, independent in their choices and capable of overcoming crises.

We hope that Member States, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, will make every effort to interpret and apply the provisions of the resolutions of the Security Council in accordance with their normal legal meaning and not on the basis of whims and the political interests of this or that State. Any course of action that deviates from this principled rule would lead only to loss of credibility and utterly undermine the principle of good faith in the determination of international obligations.

The United Nations was established in order to achieve the common goals of preserving peace, security and stability in the world. The provisions of the Organization's Charter, in letter and in spirit, are founded on the balancing of rights and duties and aim at protecting the common interests of the international community. Therefore policies that are based on the logic of naked power and unilateral action outside the concepts of the Charter, and that aim at achieving individual objectives, are bound to contradict the very *raison d'être* of the Organization and to contravene the letter and spirit of its Charter. Such policies would only lead to the marginalization of the Organization's role in international affairs.

It behoves us as we are about to celebrate half a century of the existence of the Organization to rededicate ourselves to honouring our undertakings as enshrined in the Charter.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia, His Excellency Mr. Valdis Birkavs, on whom I call.

Mr. Birkavs (Latvia): Allow me to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election as President of the General Assembly. I wish all of us a productive and fruitful session.

I also wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, President of the Assembly at its forty-ninth session, for his able leadership, and to give due recognition to the Secretary-General for his achievements in restructuring the United Nations on the eve of its golden anniversary — an occasion for remembrance and celebration, but also a time for reflection and appraisal.

The Baltic States have participated in the work of the United Nations only since 1991. Nevertheless, during

the long years of occupation the United Nations was perceived in Latvia as a unique global international Organization embodying humanity's ideas about freedom, human rights, sovereign equality and respect for the principles of international law.

I shall not join in detracting and criticizing the United Nations, for it is not an entity existing on its own. Rather, the effectiveness of the Organization is a function of the political will of its Member States and their resolve to find common ground. In criticizing the United Nations, we should keep in mind the amount of criticism that must be directed against ourselves.

It is to be hoped that the end of the cold war has put an end to balance-of-power politics. Still, the situation in the world today evokes historical analogies — about collective security, aggressors and their appeasement. A generation of Latvians still alive remembers the results of appeasement in 1939. It is often stated that today's leaders must try not to repeat the mistakes of the past. The notion that they have succeeded is belied by the recent establishment of international ad hoc tribunals regarding the territory of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and by the pressing need for an international criminal court.

Conflict-prevention mechanisms, including preventive diplomacy and preventive deployment, as well as other confidence-building measures, have become increasingly important. The establishment of political dialogue between parties and early action by the international community are a key to heading off potential conflicts.

The status of the United Nations as a centre for conflict resolution may be enhanced by promoting the universality of the Organization. We support the statement of the Secretary-General that the process of arms control and disarmament needs to be globalized and that it is vital that all States be engaged in the disarmament process in practice as well as in declared intent. Latvia supported the unconditional and indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We hope that another historic step will be taken next year with the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

The dramatic rise in the number and complexity of peace-keeping operations in recent years, as well as the distinctive nature and experience of each operation, requires new approaches to peace-keeping. Humanitarian assistance, human rights and economic and political questions are now integral components of peace-keeping. Experience shows that it is necessary to detach peace-keeping from enforcement action. In Somalia, as well as in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, peace-keepers have been perceived as enemies. In such cases the most suitable solution is for the United Nations to grant clearly defined authority to international organizations or groups of States that have the desire and the capacity to establish peace.

Recognizing that each State has a duty to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, Latvia is ready to participate, within the Danish battalion, in bringing peace to the territory of the former Yugoslavia. For the purposes of peace-keeping, the Baltic States have established a Baltic battalion (BALTBAT), which is currently undergoing intensive training in preparation for a future role in peace-keeping missions. I take this opportunity to thank all countries that have supported the establishment and training of BALTBAT — in particular, the United States, the Nordic countries, the United Kingdom and Germany.

Latvia strongly supports efforts to strengthen and reform the United Nations system so that it may better serve the peoples of the Earth. It recognizes that it is still too early to clearly perceive the shape of the post-cold-war world, which must be the final determinant of the nature of the necessary reforms.

In these circumstances there is a need to view reforms of the United Nations system as a long-term, ongoing process that must protect the stability of the United Nations system at all times. At the same time, there is an opportunity for progress in regard to reforms which can be made without making permanent commitments to new fundamental system structures and procedures.

In the light of these general considerations, I should now like to address Security Council reforms and United Nations system financing issues.

The operation of the Security Council must continue to become more transparent and open, while preserving the Council's effectiveness. Its expansion must strengthen the role played by small countries in global decision-making, while respecting equitable geographic distribution and the new geopolitical realities of the post-cold-war era.

Since there is general agreement about the need for a modest expansion of the Security Council, the General Assembly could immediately decide to carry it out, if the

decision would not force Member States to make permanent commitments on the two controversial issues — the composition of the Council and the use of the veto. Latvia intends to make proposals in this regard to the relevant Working Group of the General Assembly.

The current system of financing the activities of the United Nations depends largely on assessed and voluntary contributions of Member States. The unprecedented difficulties of financing the recent growth in international activities have exposed the limitations of the current system, in which international activities have to compete for funds against national activities that have stronger constituencies.

A recent report, commissioned by the Independent Commission for Population and Quality of Life, on innovative financing mechanisms for internationally agreed programmes, has made a number of recommendations to study and compile information relevant to such mechanisms. Latvia would support a decision by the General Assembly at this fiftieth session to prepare a compilation of information relevant to, and appropriate studies of, innovative financing mechanisms.

Innovative financing mechanisms are a matter for the future. Even then, they should not supplant the current system, which, however, needs to be improved. Governments have a long-range interest in strengthening the United Nations by completing the reform of the current, highly inequitable scale of assessments for the regular budget. The reformed scale must obey the equitable principle that Member States with equal average per capita incomes should bear assessments that are broadly at the same per capita level.

The current inequitable scale is one cause of the current financial crisis of the United Nations, in that the over-assessed States are responsible for relatively high amounts of outstanding contributions, including arrears from preceding years.

This observation is illustrated by the case of the 15 Member States, including Latvia, that were over-assessed by a General Assembly decision, adopted by vote, in 1992. A second decision in 1994 improved the situation somewhat, by initiating a gradual decline in the excessive assessment, which in 1997 will still be two times higher than the assessment based on the principle of capacity-to-pay.

While Latvia recognizes and tries to discharge its obligation, derived from the principle of sovereign equality, to pay in full and on time, it also believes that a second component of the principle of sovereign equality — the equal rights of all Member States — is not respected by the present assessment. The resulting over-assessment is a reason that has led, in spite of Latvia's best efforts under difficult financial conditions and in the face of many pressing social, economic and humanitarian needs, to a build-up of arrears which now threaten the application of Article 19 of the Charter, beginning January 1996. It will force Latvia to seek relief from the General Assembly.

In discussing the work of the United Nations in the economic and social sphere, it is useful to do so from the perspective of the individual. Is he or she secure? Has he or she enough food? Does he or she have adequate living conditions and opportunities for developing his or her potential?

In the world today, enormous differences in levels of development persist among countries. The United Nations has accomplished a great deal in its work to eradicate poverty and disease and to provide humanitarian relief. It would be possible to further improve this work by improving coordination between relief agencies and programmes and by eliminating redundancies. Relief must address needs; the United Nations has a significant role to play in needs assessment.

In the past Member States of the United Nations have met in a number of global forums to highlight the issues surrounding people-centred development. World conferences in Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and, most recently, Beijing have drafted platforms for action. Such large gatherings are sometimes criticized as being expensive and resulting in few tangible outputs. Such criticism could be avoided if Member States were to implement their commitments fully. However implementation is greatly constrained by the financial realities of each State.

Nevertheless, Latvia has implemented a recommendation of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights by establishing a national Human Rights Office, which commenced operations earlier this year. The Latvian Human Rights Office is an independent institution for the protection and promotion of human rights.

The international community has agreed that human rights are inviolable and are the cornerstone of democratic societies. We intend to continue to implement the recommendations of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and urge other States to do the same. Further, we believe that the question of the adequate financing of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights must be resolved.

The environment is an area that, along with human rights, demands Latvia's attention during the present period of remedying the many consequences of Latvia's occupation. In this connection, Latvia is making efforts to hold an international conference on disarmament and its relationship to environment and development.

Latvia's development, particularly in the social sector, has been greatly assisted by the work of the Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), established in Riga in 1992. The Government of Latvia fully cooperates with and supports the work of UNDP, and is ready to increase the level of this cooperation.

Latvia attaches high priority to the economic and social work of the United Nations and understands the obligation of each Member State to contribute to this work. We value and support the efforts to reform the Economic and Social Council and, in the spirit of sustaining and furthering its work, have presented our candidature for membership in the Economic and Social Council for the period 1997-1999.

In pondering the future of the United Nations during its fiftieth anniversary, allow me to quote Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., a former United States representative to the United Nations:

> "This Organization is created to prevent you from going to hell. It isn't created to take you to heaven."

Let us remember these words as we look to the future of the United Nations. Let us make the necessary changes to our Organization and, moreover, concentrate our political will so that we may ensure that humanity will always remain firmly anchored between heaven and hell, on the planet Earth.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the Chairman of the delegation of Malawi, His Excellency Mr. David Rubadiri.

Mr. Rubadiri (Malawi): Allow me to congratulate the President on his election to his high office at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The Government and the people of the Republic of Malawi hold him and his great country, Portugal, in high esteem. His appointment to preside over the deliberations of the Assembly during this important session, as the United Nations commemorates its fiftieth anniversary, is an indisputable reflection of the recognition of his eminence by the international community. My delegation is confident that he will guide the deliberations of the Assembly to a fruitful conclusion.

At the same time, allow me to pay tribute to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, who, in spite of the complexity of the issues and the difficult constraints which confronted the United Nations during his tenure, guided the work of the forty-ninth session with admirable skill, dignity and vision.

It is indeed very difficult to have to speak today after His Holiness the Pope, lest those words which this morning flew up to high rafters of this building be forgotten. We in Malawi feel that perhaps it was our fate to be scheduled to speak after him. The Assembly will recall that the Pope talked about the moral aspects of nationhood, politics and relations between nations. The Assembly will also remember how he gave the word freedom a new dimension and meaning, saying that man will insist on it, whether small or big. The Assembly will also remember the moral responsibility he put upon the human being, both as an individual and as a member of the community of what is really a small planet. One need only fly a few miles up in the air from this little planet, which we call Earth, to see that we all really look like little rabbits dashing from one foxhole to another. However, as human beings, we also resemble God, our creator. To me it seemed as if our call to speak after him, this afternoon, was an occasion to try to strengthen what His Holiness the Pope left with us this morning.

The twentieth century is soon coming to an end. Historians will remember and record it as the century of three great phenomena, I think. The first was the establishment of a power structure, as demonstrated by the rise of the great experiments: the experiment in democracy built on capitalism and respect for individual rights and the experiment in socialism based on a social contract for a community with a common purpose. The conflict of these ideas would lead to the emergence of what would dominate the world's political ways during

the first 45 years of this Organization's existence: the cold war.

The second great phenomenon that the Pope referred to was the fall of the empires built by the European Powers from Asia to Africa and the proud rise of colonized people to independence. The third — and perhaps the most heart-rending — phenomenon of this century was that of racism. We saw it first in South Africa and later began to see it rearing its ugly head in the twilight of this century.

The curtain of this act finally falls on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Let us remember the joy and ecstasy with which the former colonial countries emerged into independence as Members of this body. What genius woke up to think of and, later, to found this Organization? What idealism sustained it? Yet a dark shadow haunted it in its growth; and now, as the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary is upon us, we somehow realize that perhaps the cold war, that Iron Curtain, was used by the great Powers, in the name of democracy, human rights and justice for all, simply to keep a balance of power.

Malawi does not wish to seem bitter in expressing some of these thoughts; but 50, even in a mere human life, is the age at which soul-searching is important. Along with many others, Malawi sowed the seeds of its own gorgon 30 years ago — what the Pope referred to as the totalitarian totem. The pattern of Presidents-for-life and one-party autocracies bred a series of dictatorships supported by the interests of the cold war's great Powers.

When *perestroika* knocked on the door, man heaved a sigh of relief. The cold war had ended. We in Malawi were not left behind. A new dawn broke in the land once described by Africa Watch as a place where silence rules.

Last year Malawi stood up in this Assembly to declare proudly that a people cannot be kept down for ever by man's inhumanity to man. Thanks to the action of the United Nations, Malawi fought, this time not for independence, but for democracy. A referendum in 1993 and a general election, supervised by this world body and other friends, on 17 May 1994, gave birth to a new country. This is what the Pope referred to as "hope".

Today, a year and five months later, the four estates of democracy are taking root in Malawi. We now have an elective executive and a pluralist parliament with one of the most active and articulate oppositions slowly learning the complex art of debate and the art of give-and-take. In addition, we also have an independent judiciary protecting the bastion of the rule of law from which all human rights are protected and nurtured and we have an independent and free press.

These four estates are almost a novelty in Malawi after 30 years of autocracy and a dictatorship responsible for the most vicious abuse of human life. Above all, it is important to remember that pathological hero worship is the price people pay for losing their self-respect. There is therefore cause to celebrate the 50 years of the life of the United Nations — especially for Malawi for, from the land of the dead, we have come back to the land of the living.

We are astonished, however, that at this moment of rebirth Malawi — and possibly other countries — seem to have been abandoned. Could this be what the Pope was talking about — the small nations — those which have power, whether it be economic or military? Where are those great friends of yesteryear, the great friends of the days of the cold war? We are astonished that as we are rejoicing in our new democracy they are now standing aloof watching our skeletons of hitherto silenced and abused citizenry feeding the flickering fires of democracy against the howling winds of poverty, hunger and disease. In this wider breakthrough of understanding in the universe, let us be thankful that on this tiny planet there is on the East River in New York a piece of land where people meet to discuss problems — some no bigger than an ant-hill and some larger — thankful that somewhere there is a little hill called Everest near Kathmandu where lilliputian human ants can crawl up and become heroes!

After 30 Years of educated leadership we are still one of the least developed countries in the world, highest in the rate of illiteracy and the most highly indebted, but the most beautiful in nature and the one best qualified, perhaps, for a Marshall Plan.

Malawi is among those countries in the world that have a high incidence of the HIV/AIDS infection. This pandemic has seriously affected the young and active segment of the population, which is the hub of development activity in all sectors of the national economy. We commend the untiring efforts of the World Health Organization and other institutions which, together with my Government, are actively engaged in tackling this pandemic.

But perhaps I might add that, above all, the Conference on Women held in Beijing brought to the fore, at least for us, the entire issue of trying to understand the whole question of man's responsibility towards man and the importance of the idea of hope and sustenance in recognizing the role of women, for in my country 70 per cent of the economy and 70 per cent of human love and care and 70 per cent of all that makes a nation admirable is in the hands of women.

How can one understand those who caused so many bombs and mines to be planted in Mozambique and Angola? How do they think of the women and children who wake up with new hope and who go to fetch water or plant their plantations and who find themselves blown up by those who should have cared much more than to play with such weapons — such utterly senseless weapons of destruction?

Until recently my country hosted a large number of refugees from Mozambique when that country was experiencing civil strife. The size of the refugee community, which peaked at over a million, has now decreased as refugees are returning home since the conclusion of a peace accord between the then warring FRELIMO government and the forces of RENAMO.

However, despite the ongoing repatriation of the refugees back to Mozambique, a strong legacy of environmental degradation is left behind. Deforestation, overgrazing, and the destruction of roads used by relief supply vehicles are some of the problems which resulted from the presence of the refugees.

In addition, Malawi is playing host to a number of refugee communities from around Africa — from Rwanda and Somalia — although their numbers have grown nowhere near those reached by our brothers and sisters from neighbouring Mozambique.

The Government of Malawi would like at this juncture to express its most sincere gratitude and appreciation for the kind and invaluable assistance received from the United Nations system, particularly through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as from donor Governments and agencies, and non-governmental organizations at a time when we most needed help.

Since the region experienced severe drought in the 1992 and 1993 crop seasons, with a mild recovery in 1993 and 1994, rainfall has continued to be erratic in southern Africa. The economy of Malawi, which is almost entirely agro-based, has been hard-hit, resulting in chronic food shortages. This season has not been any better. Once again, the country faces severe food shortages, which the Government has to meet through importing grain, mainly maize. Is this a test of our democracy? Can a democracy, even a classical Grecian one, grow on an empty stomach?

Against this background is the programme for the alleviation of poverty, which the new Government of Malawi has enunciated in order to tackle the chronic poverty which it inherited from the previous regime. The poverty-alleviation programme seeks to target the rural poor, who are in the majority as the primary beneficiary. A poverty-alleviation fund has been set up, along with a Malawi social action fund, which is a component thereof. The programme is multisectoral in approach and aims at promoting the education and health sectors among others. The Government has, in this regard, introduced free primary school education and has also tried to increase the number of schools.

My Government would therefore like to thank the United Nations system and the donor community and the many other institutions in the private sector — especially the missionary sector — which have extended assistance in our development endeavours, for if our courage and hope had not been evoked by the Catholic bishops of Malawi I would not be speaking here today. I am a product of the 30 years of exile which totalitarianism imposed on my country.

The success of the poverty alleviation programme therefore becomes a major aspect of our hopes and expectations. The new culture of tolerance has created a highly conducive climate for investment. We have therefore opened the door to prospective investors to come, explore and take advantage of the opportunities which exist in other areas such as tourism, irrigation, mining and other sectors of the economy.

Malawi has noted with interest the ongoing efforts to reform the United Nations system. We have observed in particular the various proposals that have been put forward on the reform of the Security Council. The Security Council is, truly, an important organ of the Organization. It is therefore proper and fitting that an organ of such high standing should operate in an accountable and transparent manner. In addition, Malawi supports measures aimed at enhancing equitable representation in an effort to reflect the existing

international political configuration as well as the composition of the United Nations.

As Malawi consolidates genuine freedom and democracy it is pleasing to note that the rest of the southern African region has unwaveringly embraced this new culture of political pluralism and tolerance. More important, those countries which have for long been devastated by civil strife have either resolved or are in the process of resolving their misunderstandings.

Malawi welcomes encouraging moves towards the demobilization of combatants of both the Angolan Government Forces and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) under the third United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III). We fully commend the invaluable role which we, the United Nations, are playing in Angola.

In South Africa, the post-apartheid Government of President Nelson Mandela is now firmly in place. Incidentally, I am glad I can pronounce it properly, for it is not "apartheid" but "apart hate" — put apart and hate. The demise of "apart hate" brightened prospects for peace and cooperation in southern Africa. Malawi therefore calls upon the international community to render unflinching support to the new and emerging democracies in the region so that they do not slide back to anarchy and authoritarianism.

The Malawi Government is concerned about the slow pace at which the identification of eligible voters is proceeding in Western Sahara. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations to extend its Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) as a show of genuine commitment to resolving this long-standing issue. It should, however, be noted that without the commitment of the principal players in the matter the current efforts will all be in vain. We therefore call upon the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco to allow the United Nations Mission a free hand in its operations so that the deadline of January 1996 for the holding of a referendum can be met.

Malawi has noted with a good deal of concern the horrendous massacres of innocent people in the Central African country of Rwanda. However, despite the continued existence of ethnic tensions, the efforts of the United Nations to ensure that peace finally descends upon this troubled area have not faltered. To this end, my Government earnestly commends the role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), to which we have made a modest contribution of military observers as a demonstration of Malawi's commitment to the restoration of peace.

The militarization of the refugee camps outside Rwanda is a source of great concern to Malawi. We therefore call upon the international community to do its utmost to reverse the reported inflow of weaponry into the refugee camps, and appeal to the people of Rwanda to exercise political maturity in order to avoid a degeneration of the situation into the tragedy of yesteryear, especially when the mandate of UNAMIR expires on 9 December 1995.

My Government is encouraged by the progress being made in the Middle East peace process. We commend the courage and determination of the Government of the State of Israel as well as the leadership of the Palestine National Authority to move ahead. The two players deserve the unflinching support and applause of the international community to ensure that elements which are opposed to the peace process do not succeed.

On the other hand, we have observed with remorse the tragedy which has unfolded in the countries of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Innocent civilians have been the most hurt in the shifting fortunes of war in the Balkan region. Understandably, the United Nations and the rest of the international community can play only a limited role in the resolution of the conflict. My Government, therefore, calls upon the principal players in the region to cooperate with the international community in finding a lasting solution to the conflict.

It is the hope of my Government that the Korean people on both sides of the thirty-eighth parallel will sustain and strengthen contact, with the aim of breaking the existing impasse in the reunification of the divided peninsula.

In the same vein, my Government favours any efforts the United Nations may undertake with the aim of resolving the issue of the international status of the Republic of China on Taiwan in a manner which would be acceptable to both the Government of the People's Republic of China and the authorities in Taiwan.

As the United Nations celebrates 50 years of existence, let us take full stock of the work of the Organization since its birth. Let us retrace our steps and weigh our achievements and failures so that we may approach the twenty-first century with renewed vigour

and commitment. Let us not lose sight of the ideals which the Organization stands for as we continue to uphold the necessary flexibility for its adaptation to current trends.

Lastly, to those who love and cherish democracy let the word go out, lest we forget, that the name "Nyasaland" at one time represented the biblical David and Goliath in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which, if it had been given birth, would have made the script for that region a different story. When the borders that defined our nationhood opened again and we became part of Mother Africa and the rest of the world, our State President, Bakili Muluzi, burst out of a suffocated Malawi, which had become a prison, and invited the world to come and rejoice with us. The silent Malawians who had crept out of Malawi, cautious not to speak to others about the pain of imprisonment and death in their prison country, now saw a new leadership, not only in President Muluzi, but in the people of the country themselves. If these 15 months of the new Malawi have not meant much to the World Bank, the fatigued donors and the sceptical theoreticians, let them remember the following great words of Pliny:

> "There is always something new out of Africa. Its presence on this continent, like the great seas that surround it, are legendary. Ignore Africa to your peril." *(Pliny the Elder,* Natural History, *VII, 77)*

In the same breath, we plead to you here again and again: listen to what was said at the United Nations social summit meeting, at the United Nations women's summit meeting and during the International Year of the Child. There is no hope for mankind in the twenty-first century and after without a United Nations based on those three great occasions. Malawi pleads to those great nations that have grown up with the ideals and ideas of human giants of the world not to jump off the ship that carries us all. No one can say, "Stop the world, I want to get off."

On behalf of the people of Malawi, I thank Members of the General Assembly for their attention.

Mr. Oyono (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Cameroon congratulates Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We wish him well as he guides the work of this historic session, which coincides with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. Knowing as I do Mr. Freitas do Amaral's distinction as an educator and a statesman, I welcome his election.

Moreover, the President represents a friendly country, Portugal, whose involvement in Africa is of long standing and which shares with Cameroon a part of our history: When he alit on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea in 1472, the Portuguese Fernando Po was much impressed with the abundance of shrimp in the waters off what is now the city of Douala and named the place "Rio dos Camarões" — Shrimp River — from which Cameroon takes its name.

We also convey our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, for the way in which he carried out his responsibilities as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

Finally, we pledge to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our constant support in his tireless efforts to enable the Organization to attain its noble purposes.

It is of enormous significance that the present session of the General Assembly should coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. The United Nations, which sums up and expresses the deep-felt aspiration of the peoples and nations of the world to peace, freedom and progress, has become an indispensable conclave of nations. The Organization's universality makes it the ideal forum for governing the world order.

The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary should therefore be a source of satisfaction to the entire international community. It provides an opportunity to gauge how far we have come since the beginning and to consider our views on the future of the Organization. When they created the United Nations after the Second World War, the founders affirmed their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

Fortunately, for more than half a century the North — once the epicentre of most of history's major conflicts — has been a place of peace and cooperation; and, despite the build-up of weapons of mass destruction, the rivalry between the two great ideological and military alliances did not drag international society into a third world war, which would have sealed the fate of mankind.

Aware of the danger to the world posed by the arms race, the United Nations encouraged the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its indefinite extension; it has promoted the creation of

denuclearized zones, *inter alia* in Africa, and the conclusion of the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons; and it has given decisive impetus to multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

We are glad that, in its ongoing quest for peace, the Organization has been able when necessary to adapt the Charter to the realities, including by devising the notion of peace-keeping operations, which have defused many conflicts and created favourable conditions for dialogue and negotiation.

By awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to United Nations peace-keeping forces on 29 September 1988, the Nobel prize committee paid tribute to the devotion and courage of the more than half a million men and women who since 1948 have served the cause of peace all over the world.

Even if in recent years peace-keeping operations have had mixed results and have been accused of consuming the lion's share of United Nations resources to the detriment of development, it must be recognized that while the path has not always been smooth, these operations have on the whole yielded positive results. The "Agenda for Peace", then, remains relevant, and must continue to be the foundation of United Nations peace-keeping operations.

Cameroon supports the recommendations of the Working Group to strengthen these operations by defining in advance precise objectives, the timeframe for the intervention, and the resources needed for implementation. Similarly, and as we have always said, the United Nations must strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations by making available the means necessary to enable them to discharge their peace-keeping mandate. That is why we welcome cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in the area of prevention, management and settlement of conflicts on a continent riddled with crises and conflicts of many forms and many dimensions.

This applies also on the subregional level: to the role in the area of peace-keeping of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which deserves support, as the Committee, which was created with the assistance of the Secretary-General, brings together 11 Central African countries which have decided to set up within their national armed forces units specializing in peace-keeping operations to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. Cameroon trusts that the United Nations will show greater interest in this available force of more than 10,000 soldiers, which could serve as reserve forces for peace missions.

Another area where United Nations action has been particularly significant is decolonization. Thanks to that action and to their own peoples' emancipation struggles, many colonial Territories have gained independence and sovereignty; today they make up more than half of the membership of the Organization. More than any other continent, Africa is proud to have unswervingly promoted the process of its own total liberation, which was recently completed with the end of apartheid in South Africa.

Here we recall with gratitude that it was under United Nations auspices that Cameroon attained sovereignty after having been first a German colony, then a Territory under League of Nations Mandate, then a United Nations Trust Territory. It is our hope that the few Territories remaining under foreign administration will freely exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, so that the United Nations objective of the complete eradication of colonialism by the year 2000 may be realized.

Also to the credit of the Organization are the promotion of human rights, the ongoing development and codification of international law, and achievements in all the areas covered by the specialized agencies.

The promotion and protection of human rights in general and those of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in particular are at the centre of our concerns and those of the United Nations. The creation of the Centre for Human Rights, the convening at Vienna of the World Conference on Human Rights and the appointment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights all enable the United Nations to follow progress in the area of human rights throughout the world and to assert certain principles by which States must abide. Cameroon welcomes this, and attaches great importance to recognition of and respect for all human rights, including the right to development.

As regards humanitarian assistance, our Organization has been active on all fronts where it has been needed, providing aid to victims of catastrophes and natural disasters and war.

At this stage, I would like to mention and welcome action taken in the field by the United Nations through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

On another matter, we would like to welcome progress by the United Nations in the fight against the scourge of drugs. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme is a result of concerted efforts by the United Nations and Member States in the fight against the production, sale, demand for and traffic in, and the unlawful distribution of, drugs and psychotropic substances. Cameroon pledges and invites other States to pledge unreservedly their support for the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in order to stop the scourge of drugs.

We would like to emphasize the considerable efforts exerted by the United Nations to focus the attention of the international community, in the context of world conferences, on other questions of interest that require collective action, which should be taken by the entire community of nations. These concerns have been manifested through the World Summit for Children, the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna, the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen, the Cairo Conference on the Prevention of Crime, and Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing. On the question of women, it is highly desirable that all States immediately follow up on the decisions and recommendations of the Beijing Conference.

But these successes of our Organization that I have just mentioned may not have met the expectations of all peoples.

First, in the area of international peace and security, the Organization has not been able to prevent the spread of sources of tension and conflicts throughout the world. Until recently, it has been practically powerless in the face of the tragedies of the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda.

In the economic arena, the Organization, notwithstanding the declaration of four United Nations decades, has not succeeded in adopting declarations, programmes of actions and other strategies to bring about progress and economic and social development in developing countries. The proof is that conditions in these countries are still unfavourable, and, in order to experience growth once again, they must engage in policies of structural adjustment, the social burden of which has been a source of major concern to their Governments. This is true also of the high price they must pay to join the mainstream of world trade in order to avoid further marginalization.

Development is primarily the responsibility of States and the peoples concerned. Cameroon nevertheless believes that the United Nations should, because of its universality and in the best interest of the international community as a whole, help to ensure global solidarity and interdependence with a view to promoting development for all. This means that we must stop inveighing against Africa in uniformly pessimistic, not to say doomsday, tones. This style is all too familiar and suggests that our continent is, in the history of the world, nothing but a passive onlooker. But who, in all seriousness, can place at the sidelines of world events an entire continent, with 700 million inhabitants today — 800 million in the year 2,000 — and with immense natural, human, cultural and spiritual wealth? In this connection, the Holy Father, speaking of Africa, on the occasion of his recent second visit to Cameroon, appealed in his post-synod apostolic exhortation for avoidance of any blanket condemnations of an entire population, an entire nation or, still worse, an entire continent.

In spite of the serious difficulties that it must overcome, Africa is determined to shoulder responsibility for its future. The sweeping changes which it is experiencing today are nothing but the forerunners of a nascent order whose purpose will be to integrate our continent into the world of the third millennium. This process of transformation is already yielding fruit in most of our countries.

As regards Cameroon, I would like in this connection, to emphasize our irreversible pursuit of the process of democratization begun by Presidency Paul Biya at the very moment he assumed power in 1982. Between now and the end of this year, there will be significant progress in this process with the adoption of a new Constitution allowing for greater democratic participation by the citizens of Cameroon in the management of their own affairs, and a better balance among the various powers of Government.

I would like to mention the impact our measures of recovery and economic liberalization have had on various

sectors of activity. Cameroon is enjoying self-sufficiency in food, and is beginning to enjoy growth again. Inflation has been halted and macroeconomic balance in major areas has been re-established. In a word, there are signs of life in economic activity. Strengthened by the credibility confirmed — had that really been needed — by the recent signing of the agreement with the International Monetary Fund, my country is widening its action for the acceleration of its economic recovery.

Our Organization is confronted with a sudden and unexpected acceleration of history. Never has there been such an acute sense of upheaval. The same questions keep cropping up everywhere: Will the world in the future be meaningless? What will the world order be like in the future? Will the Organization have a hand in this new order? And, finally, will it have the ability to be the melting pot for this? But, when all is said and done, the end of the cold war has brought fair weather.

However, it is clear that, 50 years after its creation, the Organization needs to turn over a new leaf. That being so, might it not be highly desirable for it to re-think its role, its tasks, its functions, with a view not just to adapting to this new context, but to responding better to the ever-increasing and ever-more-insistent aspirations of the peoples to peace and well-being? In any case, this is the desire of Cameroon.

These are the responsibilities we would like the Organization to shoulder in order to ensure a better world and a better future for the generation of the next millennium. In this connection, the manner in which the United Nations discharges its responsibilities, or rather the success of United Nations missions, will depend on the real collective political will of its Member States.

For its part, Cameroon feels that the current thinking on the restructuring of the Security Council augurs well for the revitalization of the Organization. The same is true of the successful outcome of peace-keeping efforts made possible by United Nations action and the concerted action of the international community in Cambodia, Central America, Angola, Haiti, Mozambique and Eritrea. On the same lines, the new diplomatic deals that are evolving in the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East are undeniably very encouraging developments.

In the final analysis, then, there is no reason not to believe that in the near future the peoples of regions where conflicts are continuing will, like so many others, have their rendezvous with peace.

In all of these cases, Cameroon has the feeling that a lasting solution will have to come through a meeting of the political wills of the chief protagonists and the collective will of the international community.

In spite of the difficulties that have impeded action in the areas both of peace-keeping and of economic and social development, the balance sheet of the Organization — though certainly uneven — is not as negative as some would have us believe. The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations gives the international community an ideal opportunity to consider the ways and means available to our Organization to carry out the collective work of ensuring peace, security and prosperity for all.

This anniversary must also be taken as an opportunity for renewal, for highlighting and praising the wealth of universality in the diversity in our Organization. This is an opportunity to renew our pledge and commitment to the purposes and ideals of the Charter. This pledge and this commitment must be translated into a strengthening of our determination and our ability to act collectively so that, as was the wish of the founding fathers, we can save future generations from anguish, fear, poverty, suffering and all sorts of uncertainty, and so that we may finally move forward along the path of transforming the tools of war into the tools of peace.

Cameroon, for its part, is prepared to contribute.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Moussa Chehem.

Mr. Chehem (Djibouti) (*interpretation from French*): The United Nations has today reached a historic turning-point for at this session, we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. I am convinced that this Assembly will benefit greatly from the President's vast experience as a distinguished jurist. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to extend to Mr. Freitas do Amaral my sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly for a session which will undoubtedly prove to be productive.

We are deeply indebted to Mr. Amara Essy for the active and competent way in which he conducted the proceedings of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. It should indeed be noted that a number of

problems and reforms had the benefit of particular attention under his presidency.

We would also like to express our gratitude and our high regard to the Secretary-General for his enlightened and pragmatic leadership. Today, more than ever, the universality of the United Nations offers to many of us the possibility of having our voices heard throughout the world. We would also congratulate the Secretary-General on his efforts to preserve and strengthen the role of the United Nations in its work for peace, collective security and development.

The situation in the world today, marked as it is by a multiplicity of hotbeds of tension, demonstrates to us — if that were necessary — the paramount role of the United Nations. This is naturally a subject for reflection and of course a useful matter for us to ponder when we analyse our compliance with the Charter and the ideals set forth in it as we now stand on the threshold of an era which, without any doubt, will prove vital for mankind.

Today, indeed, we are living in a different world — a world which the end of the cold war has stripped of the structures and priorities that were familiar to it. New crises, difficult to understand and to which we must today find appropriate responses, have arisen in all parts of the world. Neither States nor even regions can deal with them effectively and individually.

The explosion of ethnic identities, too long suppressed, and the breaking up of States, have posed formidable challenges to the international community, thus threatening international peace and security. The crises that are ravaging the world today are not as specific as those of the cold-war era. Since they fall outside the focus of interest of the great Powers, the responsibility for action falls on the United Nations. However, the absence of clear-cut mandates, plus the inadequacy of resources, is partially responsible for the performance of the United Nations in its new role as guarantor of peace. In the light of these circumstances, it is no surprise that early intervention is often late in coming. But when the United Nations does possess the necessary resources and support, it can achieve commendable results.

The persistence of social and economic crises, the collapse of Governments and structures underlie this outbreak of civil conflicts in the world. It is clear that it is not enough simply to separate the combatants and stop the fighting in order to eliminate the multidimensional causes of these conflicts. Until these causes are understood and combated from the very outset of the crisis, we will never be in a position to combat the flagrant acts of violence against civilian populations. Until we are ready to offer firm resistance to injustice, to acts of aggression, to continuing violations of human rights and peoples, we will be doomed to watching history repeat itself over and over again. Recent experiences of the United Nations have demonstrated this, but none of them is more revealing than the history of Bosnia.

Nothing has contributed as much as Bosnia to engendering a feeling of outrage within the international community. Although numerous resolutions of the Security Council reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia, confirming the inadmissibility of the annexation of territory by force and condemning "ethnic cleansing" have been adopted, the reaction of the international community to the challenge posed by the Serbs has always been hesitant and confused. The cost of this war in terms of loss of human life, hardship and material destruction is frightening. Serb bombings have turned the designated "safe areas" into vast prisons. Sarajevo has suffered by far the most from Serb strangulation.

However, the fall of the "safe areas" of Srebrenica and Zepa marked a turning-point in the attitude of the great Powers in this long and bloody conflict. These acts of genocide undoubtedly constitute one of the greatest humiliations for the international community since the Second World War. The combined effects of bombings and diplomacy seem to have negated Serb domination on the ground at the same time as it has promoted prospects for peace. Furthermore, United Nations personnel and humanitarian convoys are no longer exposed to Serb attacks thanks to the recent resolve shown by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. For the time being, aggression is not paying off and the Serbs seem to have partially renounced their traditional tactic of murdering civilians with impunity. Over all, developments in the situation have dealt a new hand and breathed new life into the peace process. We welcome this new attitude, but peace must be both durable and honourable for all people. Bosnia, as a sovereign State, must be protected. Similarly, Sarajevo must be preserved as a multiracial and multicultural city.

The handshake between President Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin in September 1993 was a source of great hope and we can but rejoice further at recent events. The second phase of negotiations led to the signing in Washington of the Taba Accord on 28 September 1995.

We can only welcome that outcome. We encourage the two parties to persevere in their efforts to expedite the implementation of these agreements. They must strive to contain the violence of extremists and to take all necessary measures to strengthen mutual trust, which will, undoubtedly, contribute to lasting peace.

The mutual recognition of Israel and of the PLO has opened up a tremendous opportunity to strengthen peace and development in the Middle East, as well as trading and economic potential for the entire region. These are the stakes and neither of the parties, neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis, should underestimate the importance of this new perspective.

Sometimes there are mixed feelings about United Nations efforts around the world to contain hostilities and settle disputes. The United Nations has effectively been paralysed and hamstrung by the lack of resources and the absence of any precise mandate during the crisis in Rwanda. The establishment of the International Tribunal, for Rwanda which is responsible for trying and prosecuting the persons guilty of genocide has also been delayed. Serious political dialogue can be broached, because it would be hard to deny that those who promoted, encouraged or committed crimes must be taken to court. Furthermore, the whole issue of the reconciliation and reconstruction of the country has failed because of persistent internal tension and delays in the deployment of international aid. An enormous task still lies ahead, not just in terms of the repatriation of refugees but also of the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructures, including housing, schools and medical facilities.

In many respects, there are great similarities between the situation in Burundi and that in Rwanda. To date, all-out civil war has been avoided but the situation remains extremely volatile. The region as a whole is in need of true reconciliation. We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, who is trying, through constant contact, dialogue and visits to the area, to resolve these complex problems. His recent decision to appoint an experienced diplomat to organize a national conference to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding among the countries of the region is a wise decision.

After almost two decades of fratricidal and destructive warfare, Mozambique is today ready to begin the work of national reconstruction following the peace process. We should congratulate all the parties that have taken part in the political transformation of Mozambique on having adhered to the peace process. Mozambique, with its tremendous potential for economic recovery and development, has a great future ahead, which it should turn to full advantage. This is a country for which the international community has every reason to congratulate itself for having given it timely support and substantial resources to back the peace process.

In Haiti, the refusal of the army to comply with the peace agreement and its intransigence in spite of the condemnation of the international community left the United Nations with no alternative but to take resolute action, beginning with economic sanctions, and then international intervention. This made it possible for the United Nations to deploy a peace-keeping mission there. With the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, political violence and human rights violations have been greatly reduced. There is now a basis for ensuring the security of the population, guaranteeing increased political participation and consolidating democracy.

The untiring efforts in the long and difficult negotiations in Lusaka to restore peace in Angola finally led to an agreement on a general cease-fire and the establishment of a government. The United Nations played a prominent role in these negotiations with the full support of three observer States. Much remains to be done, but progress has been steady and positive. The future of Angola will depend on the political will and determination of its leaders to forge a new vision, a new nation.

In Liberia, the determination of the United Nations and of the countries of the region has made it possible finally to conclude an agreement between the parties. Hostilities are nearing an end, and a cease-fire is to be negotiated. This agreement, concluded just a month ago, does not mean that our troubles are over, but we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. The Liberian people seem determined to put a final end to this long and destructive war, and it is the duty of the international community to contribute to this long-awaited outcome the necessary resources and substantial support.

Last year, we witnessed the end of United Nations operations in Somalia, when it became clear that the determination of the various Somali parties to reach a compromise in the interests of the people of Somalia was visibly lacking. Somalia has fallen into oblivion. It is suffering from total political paralysis. Once again, it is the same old story: warfare among factions. The country must be helped to get off to a new start in order to create better prospects for peace and stability.

We must recall that the prospect of a new civil war is more likely than ever. The spectre of famine is looming on the horizon. And the personnel of international aid organizations faces a difficult choice: to accept a state of increasing insecurity or to abandon the country to chaos.

We want to hope that, no matter how complex and desperate the political situation in Somalia, the international community will not abandon that country and will continue to provide the necessary support to the Somalis, in particular in the realm of humanitarian assistance. We hope, moreover, that our brothers in Somalia will find the path to wisdom and engage in constructive negotiations to put an end to the suffering of the Somali people.

My country, the Republic of Djibouti, continues to face difficulties in our economic development that are exacerbated by the presence of refugees and displaced persons, which make up more than 25 per cent of our population. The pressure thus placed on our infrastructures, our medical services, our housing sector and on education and employment is more than we are able to deal with. The cumulative effects of the civil wars that have raged in recent years, both in our country and in neighbouring countries, and of natural disasters — drought as well as floods — have seriously hindered our efforts in the area of development.

A new era of peace and political stability has begun in my country, which regained its reputation as an oasis of peace after the signing of the peace agreement of December 1994 and the formation in June 1995 of a new Government that reflected the new situation.

Once peace had been achieved, and without any transition, we began the difficult process of redressing our country's finances and economy, which had been seriously affected by the consequences of three years of internal conflict and the negative world economic situation.

The first phase of a vast restructuring programme, proposed by the Government and approved by the Parliament, has just been launched through the implementation of various measures involving severe budgetary restrictions. In addition to these measures, we are currently negotiating with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for the means to carry out a structural adjustment programme. Furthermore, in accordance with the resolutions of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, we wish to preserve our social achievements, without which no lasting development can be envisaged.

On the regional level, Djibouti is still working towards the establishment of a climate of cooperation in all areas. The member countries of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) and of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have great potential and resources, and IGADD and COMESA are the best instruments for harmonization and coordination to maximize the exploitation of these resources.

On the international scene, Djibouti has discharged productively and responsibly its current term in the Security Council, and thanks all the countries that have supported it. Our participation in peace-keeping operations, particularly in Rwanda and Haiti, where Djibouti's police and armed forces are currently serving, is one of the best proofs of this.

Together with its neighbours, Djibouti hopes to be in a position to struggle against, and overcome, the consequences of instability and conflicts in our region.

We share the Secretary-General's view that the work of the United Nations is frequently misunderstood. The development crisis is often overlooked because of the priority given the short-term alleviation of emergency situations. But development is no less urgent — quite to the contrary — because today development is a global issue, and peace, the economy, the environment, social justice and democracy are its various aspects. The pressures created by poverty, unemployment and social disintegration are no longer contained within individual frontiers; they affect our entire "global village", moving from country to country and from region to region. Only consistent growth and lasting development will be able to halt them. But, clearly, no country, no region can alone successfully face these problems. Even the best-performing economies will face high unemployment if world economic growth is not sufficient to absorb their production. If we restrict ourselves to promoting growth in some sectors to the exclusion of others, the result of the growth will be unimpressive.

But it is most surprising that despite the fact that world economic growth yields sufficient resources to easily eliminate extreme poverty from the face of the Earth, poverty not only persists but continues to increase. The world has a great need of an engine for growth worldwide, a role played by the United States immediately after the Second World War, when it broadened world markets. But we can no longer hope that a single country will take on this function. Likewise,

outdated international economic policies and institutions are standing in the way of investments, the creation of development programmes and the markets necessary to increase demand in the third-world countries and consequently stimulate economic growth.

Aside from this global reality, the difficulties faced by sub-Saharan Africa are *sui generis*. The Secretary-General himself recently called the economic results in Africa disappointing, even in the countries that are engaged in-depth reforms. Thirty-three of the 48 least-developed countries in the world are in Africa. There are many results of this state of affairs and they are well known. The recent onslaught of ethnic conflicts and civil wars has greatly contributed to instability, to the many faces of poverty and to the underdevelopment of that region. These conflicts have forced millions of people to seek refuge in other countries or to become displaced persons. The situation is particularly tragic for women and children.

If Africa is to have a serious chance to develop, the crushing burden of foreign debt must be alleviated. The long-term debt of the African continent, amounting to $37 billion, constitutes about one-half of the debt owed by all the countries of the "third world". Very few of those countries are in a position to repay their debt.

However, for Africa at least to come close to the objective of 6 per cent of annual growth in its gross domestic product, as envisaged by the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, would require substantial external assistance. Even those among us who, in Africa, have opted for free markets and healthy currencies, view privatization and balanced budgets with scepticism.

This situation, exacerbated by the shocks created by structural adjustment programmes and political reform, is continuing to intensify internal pressures and social tensions.

It is important to maintain aid levels during this transitional period because this will contribute to stabilizing the economic conditions that would permit the emergence of political and social conditions propitious to free institutions. Without such assistance, our fragile economies are threatened with collapse before they can even attempt to carry out their reforms. Yet, the fact is that for the majority of African countries now engaged in this effort, the flow of capital and assistance in all forms is beginning to dry up.

As the President of the General Assembly has rightly said, the world is passing through a transitional period that is still "vague, confused and imprecise" *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1st meeting, p. 6)*. The effort to identify, to understand, to assign priorities and to try to remedy problems whose dimensions have profoundly changed has just begun. It is revealing, indeed, that in his statement the President told the General Assembly that the new international order that is to be built must not leave out the United Nations, either by replacing it or by doing away entirely with it.

For the United Nations represents a concept of work, an expression of the idea whereby all mankind should unite its strength to solve problems and improve its conditions of life. To replace, weaken or marginalize the United Nations would constitute an assault on this concept.

The United Nations, that is, mankind working together, should be the central mechanism through which the world can achieve lasting growth and to lend credibility and legitimacy to our efforts. Peace and security remain important questions, but development and economic and social problems are just as vital.

The structure of the United Nations should reflect the realities and present problems as they really exist in order to tackle them in an effective, professional way. Djibouti favours the constant monitoring of United Nations operations in order to define means and methods to eliminate all waste and reduce unnecessary costs.

However, the improvement of the functioning and the structure of the United Nations will prove of limited use if the Organization does not have the resources it needs to operate. The time has perhaps come to envisage new methods for financing the United Nations. In addition, in the realm of collective security there is a vital need to enlarge the Security Council, while respecting the principle of equitable geographical representation, and to make it more democratic and more transparent. The structure and functions of the Council should be periodically reviewed as the international situation evolves.

In conclusion, we are the United Nations, and the United Nations is us. Together we can achieve great things.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Spanish):* I now call on those representatives who have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind Members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): I wish to reply to remarks directed against the United States by the head of the Iraqi delegation. I was stunned to hear the Iraqi delegation speak about credibility. All of their actions indicate that Iraqi foreign policy has no concept of the meaning of the word.

But since he brought it up, let us discuss credibility. Many Members here today remember the Iraqi speaker here one year ago affirming that Iraq's intentions towards its neighbours were totally peaceful at the very moment when it was moving offensive forces towards the Kuwaiti border.

Let us discuss the credibility of today's remarks. Among dozens of false statements in Iraq's speech, the most obviously unbelievable is the lie that "Iraq is well aware of the fact that it is not in its interest to conceal any information relating to past weapons programmes" *(supra, p. 11)*

In fact, concealing such information has been the consistent policy of the Iraqi Government from 1991 until today. The Iraqi Foreign Minister, during several visits to New York earlier this year, assured several members of the Security Council that Iraq had turned over to the Special Commission all documents relating to its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

In August of this year, Iraq was forced to admit to what the Special Commission, the United States and most members of the Council had consistently believed: that Iraq continued to conceal documents relating to these programmes.

Let me remind this body what Iraq was forced to reveal and how dangerous Iraq's programmes were to all its neighbours. It had a crash programme to build a nuclear weapon in 1990-1991; it had weaponized live biological agents, including the deadly botulin and anthrax organisms, weapons never before used in warfare; it produced a far greater quantity of chemical weapons, in more diverse forms, than it had previously admitted; and it deliberately kept these documents hidden from the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), even as it was claiming that all information had been handed over. UNSCOM now has a responsibility to be more careful and thorough than ever in verifying the complete dismantling of these programmes.

After a constant four-year policy of deception, Iraq's current assertions have zero credibility in the Security Council, as was made manifestly clear at the last review of the Iraqi sanctions.

Iraq is seeking to turn its disregard for Security Council resolutions into a bilateral issue between Iraq and the United States. This is simply a misrepresentation of reality. Not a single member of the Security Council agrees with the assertion we have heard today that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations under the relevant resolutions. In fact, the only requirement that Iraq has fulfilled is the recognition of Kuwait's independence, sovereignty and borders, accomplished three and a half years after Iraq promised to do so. Every single member of the Council insists that Iraq must comply fully with its obligations. The great majority of the Council agrees that the sanctions cannot be lifted until Iraq is in overall compliance with its obligations.

This is not the United States position; it is the United Nations position. The programme of the United Nations is the programme of the United States: a change in Iraqi behaviour through implementation of the resolutions. Iraq's continued refusal to return stolen Kuwaiti property, to account for missing Kuwaitis, to end its support for terrorism and to cease the repression of its citizens shows its contempt for the United Nations, its lack of peaceful intentions and the impossibility of the Security Council's being able to trust Iraqi promises. Actions, not words, are what will cause the international community to treat Iraq differently.

I found particularly inconsistent the Iraqi delegation's call for implementation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. In fact, Iraq is the only country in the region that has ever deployed biological weapons into a war zone. It is the only country in the world that has ever used chemical weapons against its own civilian population. The United States is committed to the goal of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and is ready to work with any partner that shares that goal. Iraq is a long way from such a partnership.

We have heard much recently about the impact of sanctions on the Iraqi population. So let us be clear: the Security Council, and the United States in particular, care far more about the suffering of ordinary Iraqis than does the Government of Iraq. It is precisely because of the deep concern of the members of the Security Council that they endeavoured yet again to pass a Security Council resolution — resolution 986 (1995) — that provides a fair, flexible and generous mechanism for humanitarian relief in Iraq.

Why does the Iraqi Government refuse this reasonable offer? We are forced to conclude that it is Saddam Hussein's cynical and cruel belief that by maintaining the suffering of the Iraqi people he will obtain some sympathy from the world at large. Despite press reports today, we have no reason to believe that Baghdad is any more ready than in the past to accept this resolution.

If the Iraqi Government wants to restore its credibility, if it wants the world to believe that the tears it sheds over the Iraqi people are not false, let it stop the excuses and shifting of blame. Let the Iraqi delegation's next speech include an announcement that Iraq is prepared to use some of its oil wealth for the good of its people, rather than for the personal enrichment of the ruling clique.

The Iraqi representative stated that Iraq had accepted the terms of resolution 687 (1991) in 1991. There was no confusion about the terms of that resolution then, and there is none now. All that remains is for Iraq to at last do what it promised more than four years ago.

Let me, in conclusion, remind the Iraqi representative that on a day when this body has heard such a stirring speech from a religious leader respected around the world it is especially important to follow his words and those of religious leaders of all faiths by speaking the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Mr. Ghalib (Afghanistan): In response to the reply of the delegation of Pakistan, my delegation would like once again to draw the attention of the world community to the questions contained in the statement made to this Assembly by the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, to which the Pakistani authorities have long failed to provide answers. My delegation would like to reiterate that unless and until Islamabad halts its militant interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan the prevailing state of peace, security and stability in the entire region will remain in jeopardy.

The comments made by the Pakistan delegation do not address certain questions, such as, first, the fact of the continuous interference by the Pakistani intelligence services — specifically Interservice Intelligence (ISI) — in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, which met no evident denial by the Pakistani delegation; and, secondly, the questions regarding the made-up group of Taliban, such as the site of its emergence, its military hardware and expenditures, and its training and planning, as well as the tele-guided onslaught of the so-called Taliban, boosted by the act of aggression by Pakistani militia in western Afghanistan, where the occupied territories are run by a Pakistani by the name of Colonel Imam acting as de facto governor. These questions, too, were disregarded in Pakistan's reply and have yet to be answered.

In the light of these issues, my delegation would like to point out that, above all, the words of the Pakistani delegation on the situation inside Afghanistan contradict the solid principles of the United Nations Charter governing relations between countries — affirming the development of such relations on the basis of respect for equal rights and self-determination. Moreover, their comments themselves contribute to and further strengthen the evidence provided in our statement.

It is no secret that the Pakistani authorities have always attempted to cover up their undeniable involvement in the domestic affairs of Afghanistan by misinforming the world community, by propagating fabrications.

My delegation cannot conclude without saying that the statements made by the Pakistani delegation not only illustrate their linkage with and sympathy and support for the opposition, but actually sound like the opposition's voice in an international forum.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): My delegation would also like to address remarks made earlier today by the Iraqi Foreign Minister.

In his statement, the Foreign Minister of Iraq made the familiar claim that others are to blame for the problems of Iraq, and in particular for the maintenance of sanctions imposed after Iraq's unprovoked aggression against Kuwait.

The problems of Iraq and the suffering of the Iraqi people are the responsibility of the Government of Iraq, and of that Government alone. Even today, those

problems and that suffering are being prolonged and aggravated by the actions of the régime. The sanctions remain in place simply because Iraq has failed to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Foreign Minister of Iraq must know that this is the position not just of one delegation in the Security Council, but of many others, including the United Kingdom.

Iraq's latest admissions about its weapons of mass destruction, after countless assurances that it had produced full and final accounting of its past programmes, simply underlines the need for the Security Council to continue to act very cautiously.

The humanitarian needs of the people of Iraq have been addressed in a number of Security Council resolutions, most recently resolution 986 (1995), which enables the regime to sell oil to feed its people, even while sanctions remain in place. The Government of Iraq still refuse to implement this, thus inflicting continuing suffering upon their own people. That is the truth which unfortunately most Iraqis are unable to hear.

Mr. Al-Qaysi (Iraq): My Foreign Minister made it clear in his statement that he did not want to be drawn into polemics with the representative of the United States. She came to the Hall, she threw her vindictiveness, and she is just about to leave, joined by the representative of the United Kingdom, whose country's name was never mentioned by my Foreign Minister, but who took it upon himself, which is his own free choice, just to trail the United States in defence of the position of the Security Council.

It is our perception that the position of these two States is not the position of the Security Council. They took it upon themselves to speak on behalf of the Security Council collectively — and selectively, unfortunately — missing so many facts that boil down in our favour.

Let me pick up the question of credibility. What is credibility? Credibility is an ethical value, and if it is an ethical value then it should be followed by all. The two representatives who have just spoken are telling the General Assembly that Security Council resolution 986 (1995) was adopted as a fair and flexible mechanism to provide necessary care for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi population, within the framework of sanctions. That in itself is an admission that the sanctions imposed upon Iraq as a framework did not take care to provide for the necessary humanitarian needs of the Iraqi population; otherwise, a new resolution for it would not have needed to be adopted.

Was it true that this resolution, as described by the representative of the United States, was simply to sell oil to feed the Iraqi people? Has she forgotten the political thorns that were put into that resolution with a view to enabling their own plans for secession in Iraq and for interference in the internal affairs of Iraq. Where is credibility here?

Let me talk again about credibility when it comes to the question of what they called concealment of information. Despite all that was said by Mrs. Albright, whatever we found we gave to Ambassador Ekeus. The crash programme she talked about in the nuclear field was described by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as ridiculous, because they knew about it. Where is their credibility when they raise fears about past programmes, old stories, the information for which, in its totality, was given to the Special Commission and to the IAEA? If they care about credibility, why do they not wait for these two responsible bodies to conclude, within the time available, and come with their conclusion to the Security Council so that the Security Council can make the correct assessment? Why have they fanned so many concoctions against Iraq since August? Pelletreau roves around the capitals discussing the situation in Iraq; other countries are drawn in support; there are lies about Iraqi troops massing in order to attack neighbouring countries. Is that credible? I wonder.

Mrs. Albright said that there was no confusion about Security Council resolution 687 (1991) in 1991 or now. But who is confusing Security Council resolution 687 (1991)? Is it not the official position of the United States that paragraphs 21 and 22 of that resolution mean exactly the same? Who is glossing that resolution with interpretations that do not have any basis whatsoever in its provisions? It is not Iraq; Iraq is the weaker party here. It is the United States of America.

In all our contacts with the members of the Security Council and with others it has been consistently pointed out to us "If the position of the United States is such and such, then we can make such and such a move". The perception now is that there is no way to implement paragraph 22, even if the Special Commission concludes positively in favour of Iraq. Why? Because we are going into an election year in the United States. Who does Mrs. Albright think does not know about this in this Hall? Everybody knows it. Is this credible? Is this ethical under

the interpretation of the rules of the Security Council and the Charter of the United Nations?

We have repeatedly called for dialogue, but the Assembly has heard Mrs. Albright and the representative of the United Kingdom. They do not want dialogue.

Before I close, I say finally to the representative of the United Kingdom that he should know that the perception throughout the Arab world is that his country was the cause of all the ills from which we are suffering.

I say to Mrs. Albright in closing that there is a marked difference between us and her. We look forward, but she continues to cry over the past by looking backwards.

Mr. Babar (Pakistan): We have heard yet again the totally irrational statement of the representative of Afghanistan in his response to our statement in exercise of the right of reply. Let me repeat once again that Pakistan's contribution to the Afghan cause is well known. We have helped Afghanistan and its people during a very difficult period of their history. We have done so at great cost and sacrifice. We have played host to 3.5 million Afghans, including their leaders, for 14 long years. We continue to entertain the greatest sympathy for the people of Afghanistan, who are our brothers. More than 1.6 million of them still enjoy hospitality in Pakistan because of their disillusionment with the regime in Kabul.

We do not understand or appreciate the vile accusations of a regime which is clinging to power despite the loss of support of its own population. We said earlier that we have no preferences among the different groups in Afghanistan, but we are interested in peace and stability in this neighbouring country, which alone would enable the Afghan refugees still in Pakistan to return to their homeland in honour and with dignity. Only the people of Afghanistan can decide their own future. They no longer support a regime which is trying to rule the country on the basis of an ethnic minority. History tells us that such regimes do not survive.

In the interests of peace and harmony in a war-torn country, it is therefore necessary for the regime in Kabul to understand that a quick and early hand-over of power alone will enable the Afghan people to choose a Government which has the confidence and support of the people. Meanwhile, we urge the representative of Afghanistan to refrain from trying to visit the frustrations of a discredited regime on others.

Mr. Ghalib (Afghanistan): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in relation to the comments made by the Pakistani delegation at the next opportunity in the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.